

CONTEMPORARY MUSICIAN SAYS JESUS WOULDN'T BE IN CHURCH

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May 20, 1998 (David W. Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, 1701 N. Harns Rd., Oak Harbor, WA 98277) - Michael W. Smith, one of the most popular Contemporary Christian Musicians, is interviewed in the May 1998 issue of *CCM* magazine. The unscriptural mindset found among the majority of these musicians is evident throughout the interview. Consider the following excerpt:

"If Jesus was here today physically, I'm not really sure He'd be in the churches," he says in soft, measured tones. "He'd be hanging out at the bars, with the desperate and the lonely. **And I don't think He'd be going in and preaching--**I think He'd be going in and befriending people. ...

"For so many years it was like [groaning in mock tones], 'Oh, a Smitty concert. Preaching. Altar call. Fire and brimstone.' A lot of people put me in right-wing, blow-up-abortion-clinic categories. They think all Christians think that way, and it's not true. So when they see my show, they say, 'He's legit. I like that. He's not that right-wing guy. But he's spiritual, and he's got something to say--and he said something that deeply affected me tonight.' That is what you hope for" ("Michael W. Smith Engages Culture," *CCM* magazine, May 1988, p. 38).

Michael Smith is trying to justify his worldly methods and music. His "cross-over" music albums and concerts are designed to appeal to both the "saved" and the unsaved.

Smith says he's not sure Jesus Christ would be in churches. That is nonsense, of course, for it was Jesus Christ who founded the church (Matt. 16:18) and who taught the Apostles to make the churches the center of the fulfillment of the Great Commission (see the book of Acts). This is not to say that the Lord Jesus Christ is pleased with all churches today. He prophesied that there would be great numbers of false teachers who would lead people

astray into error and false churches (Matt. 7:15; 24:3,4,11,24). The Apostles of Jesus Christ made the same warning (1 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:13; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 2:18-19; 4:1). Christ and the Apostles prophesied a great apostasy, or turning from the one true faith, but they also prophesied that true churches would continue until Christ returns (Matt. 28:18-20). It is true, therefore, that the Lord Jesus Christ would not be in many of the churches which exist today, because they have rejected His Word, but it is not true that the Lord Jesus would reject all churches. He promised to be with the true churches until the end, and we can be sure that He is.

Smith also says he doesn't think Jesus would be preaching. This statement makes us wonder whether Smith has read the Bible. Christ befriended people, but he also preached, and he preached continually. Many of his sermons are recorded in the Gospels. When Matthew summarized the ministry of Christ, he said, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, TEACHING in their synagogues, and PREACHING the gospel of the kingdom..." (Matt. 4:23). Luke summarized his ministry in these words: "And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, PREACHING and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him" (Luke 8:1). Jesus Christ was a Preacher! The Apostles and early Christians followed in Christ's footsteps by preaching wherever they went: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where PREACHING the word" (Acts 8:4). The term "preach" appears 141 times in the New Testament, 37 times in the Gospels alone! The man of God is instructed to "preach the Word" in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4:1-2). We are told that God has chosen to save men by the foolishness of preaching (1 Cor. 1:21).

The passage in 1 Corinthians chapter one reminds us of why Contemporary Christian Musicians are so often opposed to biblical preaching. The unsaved hates biblical preaching. The preaching of the cross is foolish to the proud unsaved mind, and it brings the world's reproach upon the preacher. The world did not love the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ warned:

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:18,19).

It is possible to "minister" in a compromised, worldly manner so that the unsaved world thinks one is "cool" or "spiritual," but it is not possible to obey the Bible and follow in the footsteps of Christ and the Apostles and the prophets of old and have the unsaved world think one is cool! The Lord Jesus Christ said:

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great

is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:10-12)

Jesus also warned: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26).

Smith said the world enjoys his rock music and enjoys the fact that he does not preach hell fire, and so the world counts him "spiritual" and "legit" but not preachy. The term "spiritual" as understood by the world or even by the religious crowd today is meaningless. The world has no idea what true spirituality is. The world does not measure "religion" and "spirituality" by the Bible, but by its own feelings and desires and philosophies. The unregenerate world hates the preaching of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and the true preaching of the Bible, because it pronounces that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and it pronounces God's condemnation upon all men. It hates the preaching of the true Gospel because it says man's own righteousness, his very best religious, do-good efforts, is as filthy rags before a holy God. The world hates the preaching of the Gospel because it says there is none righteous, no not one, and because it warns that every person who is not born again will not see the kingdom of God but will be tormented forever and ever in the lake of fire, and because it says Jesus Christ alone is the way, the truth, and the life, and there is none other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved, and because it says all other ways are false. The world hates the preaching of the true Gospel because it demands that a man give up his life for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, because it demands that a man come out from among them and be separate, because it demands that we strive to be holy as God is holy. For the world to count someone as spiritual is meaningless from a biblical perspective. The world thinks the pope is spiritual and Native American Indians are spiritual and New Age gurus are spiritual and Hindu mystics are spiritual and Hollywood entertainers are spiritual.

For people to "be deeply affected" by a rock concert does not mean that something spiritual in a biblical fashion is occurring. People are "deeply affected" by all sorts of false religions and cults and experiences and philosophies. People are "deeply affected" by many things which happen in their day to day lives. People are deeply affected by drugs and alcohol and hypnosis and treatment programs, by secular rock songs and by Hollywood movies, by romantic affairs and by other emotionally charged circumstances. This does not mean they are truly born again or that they are in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible. The "Christian" world is filled with false christs and false gospels and false spirits. The Apostle Paul warned about these almost 2,000 years ago (2 Cor. 11:1-4), and we are told in Scripture that the religious deception would be much greater just preceding the coming of Christ (Matt. 24:3-4,11,24; 2 Thess. 2:7-11).

Brethren, beware of Contemporary Christian Music. It is the blind and carnal leading the blind and carnal down a path of delusion and error and into the arms of the one world apostate, end-times "church."